

Today, Rep. Pete Stark announced that he secured \$1.03 million in funding for Alameda and Santa Clara Counties. The money was included in H.R. 3061, the Fiscal Year 2002 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill, which passed the House of Representative yesterday and was approved by the Senate today. These funds will support the expansion of Alameda County Social Service Agency's Alternative Response System and will support Santa Clara County's first-in-the-nation effort to provide universal health insurance for all children in the county.

"I am very pleased we could secure this funding for such critical programs in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties," Rep. Stark said. "Through these funds, we will advance the efforts to keep at-risk children from entering the foster care system and will further our quest to provide health care for all children. These programs are very deserving of this funding and of our support."

The bill included \$440,000 for the Alameda County Social Services Agency's Alternative Response System (ARS). The ARS program provides early intervention and prevention services to help reduce the number of children who must enter the foster care system. The new funds will enable the county to expand the program beyond the two neighborhoods where it has been successfully piloted. The ARS model promotes strengthening the relationships in fragile families by working with community-based and faith-based organizations.

"The Alternative Response System comes to the aid of children and their families before they reach a state of crisis, hopefully averting a family separation or other legal intervention. Simply put, this program is a real winner for families. These will be federal dollars well spent and I am hopeful the program can be expanded to other parts of the country," Rep. Stark said.

The bill also included \$590,000 for Santa Clara County's Children Health Initiative. The Children's Health Initiative is a one of a kind program in the nation that seeks to provide health insurance to every child in the county. The program increases children's access to health care by expanding enrollment in existing health care programs, such as the State's Medicaid and SCHIP programs. The Initiative also created a new County insurance program known as Healthy Kids.

"Santa Clara County's Children's Health Initiative is a model for the entire nation, and I am proud to have secured federal funding for their ground-breaking effort to be the first county in the U.S. to provide universal health coverage for all its children," said Stark.

Earlier this fall, Congressman Stark also secured \$150,000 in H.R. 2620, the Fiscal Year 2000 VA-HUD Appropriations bill, for Davis Street Community Center, a family services center located in San Leandro, California. The funds will help enable Davis Street to move into a larger facility in which to provide services to the working poor.

“Davis Street has provided critical services to the working poor for over 30 years and this funding will help them to expand that mission,” Stark said.